United Nations A/C.1/52/PV.19

General Assembly

Official Records

First Committee

19th Meeting

Tuesday, 11 November 1997, 10 a.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Nkgowe . . . . . (Botswana)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda items 62 to 83 (*continued*)

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman: As I informed members of the Committee at our meeting yesterday, the Committee today will proceed to take a decision on those draft resolutions which appear in clusters 3, 4, 5 and 6, except for draft resolutions A/C.1/52/L.1, A/C.1/52/L.8, A/C.1/52/L.23, A/C.1/52/L.27/Rev.1, A/C.1/52/L.39, A/C.1/52/L.6, A/C.1/52/L.2 and A/C.1/52/L.43.

If no delegations wish to introduce revised draft resolutions, to make general statements on draft resolutions contained in cluster 3 or to explain their positions or votes before a decision is taken on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.19, the Committee will now take action on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.19.

A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.19, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", was introduced by the representative of Sri Lanka at this Committee's 16th meeting on 6 November 1997. In addition to those countries listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/52/INF/2, it was also co-sponsored by Mongolia.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia

Against:

None

97-86461 (E)

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.19 was adopted by 101 votes to none, with 40 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Haiti, Nigeria, Tunisia and Zimbabwe informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman: I will now call on those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote after the voting.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): We abstained on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.19 for several reasons, including the seventeenth preambular paragraph's identification of outer space negotiations as a priority for the Conference on Disarmament work, and operative paragraph 5's assertion that the Conference on Disarmament has a primary role in outer space negotiations.

This draft resolution suffers from a fundamental conceptual weakness. It neglects the simple fact that there is no arms race in outer space. This success story can be directly attributed to the legal agreements already in existence. These same agreements also serve to prevent a future arms race.

The continuing presence of American astronauts on board the Russian Mir spacecraft testifies to the fact that, far from being faced with an incipient arms race in outer space, we are in an era of unprecedented cooperation in space. In fact, when the Mir ran into problems this year, a multinational effort was made to keep it in orbit.

If there is work to do on outer space issues in the Conference on Disarmament — and we remain to be convinced that there is — this draft resolution does not point us in the right direction. We hope that in the future the sponsors of similar draft resolutions can take current realities into account.

Mr. Millim (Luxembourg)(*interpretation from French*): The members of the European Union abstained on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.19. The 15, however, recognize the positive changes made in its wording by Sri Lanka. The eleventh preambular paragraph, which deals with discussions in the Conference on Disarmament, is presented in a constructive manner. The European Union, while appreciating the invitation made to the Conference on Disarmament in operative paragraph 6, felt that it would be inappropriate to prejudge here the results of the debate in the Conference, which explains our abstention. It will reconsider its position on this important topic next year in a constructive spirit, in the light of developments in 1998.

The Chairman: As no other representatives wish to explain their vote after the voting, I will call on those delegations wishing to make general statements, other than explanations of their position or vote, on the draft resolutions contained in cluster 4.

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): The draft resolutions on anti-personnel landmines have generated much interest during the current session, as at the last.

For the majority of delegations supporting the draft resolutions, the driving force was humanitarian concern. However, some delegations have made it clear that the problem was not the landmines per se, but their indiscriminate use, leading to the death and maiming every year of tens of thousands of victims, mostly civilians. Others have referred to the need to have alternatives for self-defence and national security, as well as greater efforts for demining activities.

Sri Lanka is not a State party to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCWC). In Sri Lanka landmines are indiscriminately used by insurgents in their bid to create a separate State. In this context, the security forces, too, are forced to rely on landmines for the security of army camps and military installations in remote parts of the country. Consequently, we are painfully aware of the adverse impact of these weapons — not only on the members of the armed forces, but also on innocent civilians returning to their original places of habitation after those areas have been freed from insurgent activity.

In view of the humanitarian dimension of the problem, Sri Lanka decided to participate as an observer to the Ottawa process leading to the Oslo Conference last

September. Sri Lanka shares the international community's view that measures should be taken to ban the manufacture, stockpiling, use and transfer of anti-personnel landmines, sooner rather than later.

Our positive position on the draft resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/52/L.1 and A/C.1/52/L.23 was motivated by this humanitarian factor. However, in view of the current security situation prevailing in the country, Sri Lanka is not in a position to accept the invitation to sign the Convention, as per operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.1. However, we encourage those countries which are in a position to do so to sign and ratify this Convention as soon as possible. Sri Lanka will decide on becoming a party to the Ottawa Convention depending on our own national security situation and considerations.

Sri Lanka is grateful to the sponsors of the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/52/L.23 for the amendments they made to the initial text, particularly the deletion of the reference to seeking a ban on transfers. After agreement is reached on a total ban, as envisaged in the Ottawa Convention, it is not clear to my delegation what further work on landmines could be done in the Conference on Disarmament, particularly with the Amended Protocol II on landmines of the CCWC on the other side of the scale. Are we going to improve the Ottawa Convention or dilute it in the Conference on Disarmament? Is it a correct approach to seek negotiations in another forum, expecting to capture the States which are unable to become parties to the Ottawa Convention or in an attempt to seek universality? What will the impact of this exercise be on the Ottawa Convention? These are questions to which we require honest answers?

In view of the amendments made to the original text, however, Sri Lanka is in a position to vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/52/L.23. In doing so we expect the sponsors not to force the Conference on Disarmament to seek partial solutions, such as a ban on transfers, when the Conference on Disarmament meets in 1998. Sri Lanka does not wish to see the Conference on Disarmament being used as an instrument to permit some countries to manufacture, stockpile and use landmines at will and at the same time to deny others who wish to rely on anti-personnel landmines for self-defence and national security the right to import them. Such a measure will certainly not help the humanitarian cause. Rather it will exacerbate the situation, as those countries that are denied the right to import anti-personnel landmines have to set up manufacturing plants in their own countries. In such a situation, cheap and crude anti-personnel landmines will become available to those countries in numbers far greater than those of their imports. As usual, the victims of such anti-personnel landmines will be innocent civilians, and thus the very purpose of a ban on transfers will be defeated. In the circumstances, what Sri Lanka expects is the appointment of a special coordinator with a mandate to re-examine the role, if any, of the Conference on Disarmament on anti-personnel landmines in the post-Ottawa Convention era.

Finally, Sri Lanka will vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/52/L.22, as we believe that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCWC), with its review process, is the best way for the States parties to address the question of, *inter alia*, landmines, in a logical manner. Sri Lanka hopes that all countries which are ready to become parties to the Ottawa Convention will also be able to support the Amended Protocol II of the CCWC.

Mr. Jerman (Slovenia): I would like to make a general statement concerning cluster 4, which covers issues of disarmament in the field of conventional weapons.

There is no doubt that the issue of an international legal ban on anti-personnel mines is currently the most important disarmament issue in the field of conventional weapons. For this reason my delegation co-sponsored the resolutions contained in documents A/C.1/52/L.1, on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and A/C.1/52/L.22, on the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

Slovenia supports all international efforts for the legal ban on anti-personnel mines. It is our view that the world of tomorrow will be much safer without anti-personnel mines. That is why Slovenia joined the Ottawa process from its very beginning. Slovenia attended all the meetings of the Ottawa process and was actively involved in the negotiations. The Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines, which is to be signed in Ottawa in December, is a historic achievement by many countries which united their forces in the Ottawa group. I would like to take this opportunity to inform the Committee that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, Mr. Boris Frlec, will sign the Convention in Ottawa on behalf of the Republic of Slovenia.

The Convention represents a new norm of international behaviour. It is the first time that a single

Convention bans a whole category of conventional weapons. The destruction of the stockpiles of anti-personnel mines will be a very important task in the coming years. The Slovenian army has already started the process of the destruction of its stockpiles of mines. The Convention is also significant for the assistance it provides to the mine victims who suffer in many countries throughout the world.

It is clear that the signing of the Convention takes us only halfway along the road we have to travel. We have to unite all efforts and start with the process of demining mined areas worldwide. When we manage to remove all the mines that are in place, we will have achieved our major goal. Slovenia is ready to contribute its share to this process.

Finally, I would like to mention the confidence-building dimension, which, in the opinion of my delegation, should be emphasized more often. Real confidence among States can be greatly enhanced by an international legal ban on anti-personnel mines, especially within regions, subregions and between neighbours. Confidence-building is one of most important potential effects of the international legal ban on anti-personnel mines.

Mr. Paek (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to make a brief comment on the issue of anti-personnel landmines.

As my delegation has stated on various occasions, including during the general debate in this Committee, the Republic of Korea fully shares the concern of the international community about the scourge of anti-personnel landmines. The proliferation of anti-personnel landmines and their indiscriminate and irresponsible use not only inflict great suffering and death upon innocent civilians, especially children, but also pose a tremendous obstacle to the economic and social development and reconstruction of the affected region.

My Government is fully aware of the seriousness of this problem and in response has, over the past several years, taken a number of important measures. First, my Government has extended indefinitely its moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines. Secondly, we are now making the necessary preparations for our accession in due course to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCWC) and its amended Protocol II. In addition, since 1996 my Government has consistently made a financial contribution to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance. These measures demonstrate our agreement and cooperation with the efforts of the international community to contain and minimize the tragic humanitarian consequences of anti-personnel landmines.

As we all know, there has been a determined effort recently to establish a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. While we fully recognize the goal that all anti-personnel landmines should eventually be eliminated from the face of the earth, my delegation regrets that the current security situation on the Korean peninsula, and the absence of suitable alternatives, preclude my country from fully subscribing to a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. In this context, my delegation regrets that we cannot support the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.1.

My delegation does not wish in this forum to elaborate on the unique security requirements of the Korean peninsula, as that information has been outlined by my Government on many occasions and is well understood by the international community. My delegation wishes to take this opportunity, however, to re-emphasize that the anti-personnel landmines in my country are not causing humanitarian problems. They have not resulted in any civilian deaths or casualties. The minefields are fenced, clearly marked, thoroughly mapped, carefully documented and closely monitored by military personnel 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

My delegation fully shares the view that efforts to contribute to the objective of the elimination of anti-personnel landmines should be intensified at the Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. In this context, we support the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.23/Rev.1, entitled "Contributions towards banning anti-personnel landmines". We also support the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.22, in the light of our current effort to join the CCWC and its Amended Protocol II.

Mr. Pham (Viet Nam): My delegation wishes to make general comments on the draft resolutions related to the question of landmines — draft resolutions A/C.1/52/L.1 and A/C.1/52/L.23/Rev.1.

In its statement in the Committee's general debate, my delegation made its position clear on the issue of anti-personnel landmines. Viet Nam shares the great concern over the consequences of the indiscriminate use of landmines. We have been victims of landmines ourselves, and therefore recognize the gravity of the related problems and fully understand the cost in terms of human and material losses.

We fully support the strict prohibition of the indiscriminate use of landmines and the moratorium on their export. We also view mine clearance, assistance in demining and humanitarian assistance in this regard, to be extremely important, and call for greater efforts to be made. At the same time, however, it should be recognized that the central issue is the indiscriminate use of landmines.

Regarding the defensive use of these devices for the sole purpose of protecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity, it is our view that any negotiations or agreements should take into account the legitimate security concerns of States as well as their legitimate right under the Charter to self-defence. These legitimate concerns have not been duly taken into account in draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.1.

Last year, in commenting on the draft resolution relating to landmines, we made it clear that during the process of negotiating a convention on landmines we needed to take into consideration the question of self-defence and legitimate security concerns.

We recognize the efforts made by the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23/Rev.1 regarding flexibility for the States that are not in a position to accede to the Ottawa Convention.

However, the draft resolution does not make clear the concerns related to the right to self-defence and security under the Charter. Furthermore, the preamble mentions various past resolutions that we were not in a position to support.

We therefore cannot support draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23/Rev.1 and will not participate in the vote on it.

At the same time, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament will have to continue to focus on the question of nuclear disarmament.

With these comments on the two draft resolutions related to landmines, I wish to reiterate the position of Viet Nam with regard to the humanitarian issue. We share the great concern and support the prohibition on the indiscriminate use of landmines.

Mr. Karem (Egypt) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The Egyptian delegation would like to address the question of the total ban of anti-personnel landmines and to highlight a few important points. Among these is the fact that Egypt is in favour of the humanitarian objective of totally banning anti-personnel landmines. Nonetheless, Egypt has a particular problem attributable to mines planted on Egyptian territory by foreign parties who participated in wars on our territory more than 50 years ago.

There are still no determined ongoing international efforts to assist in the elimination of those mines. Consequently, Egypt has called for a balanced approach to the efforts directed towards banning the production and use of mines, and demining efforts.

Furthermore, there are defence considerations, especially for countries with long borders, where it is difficult to control infiltration, terrorism and smuggling.

Egypt is one of the countries that have suffered the most in the world and been the most afflicted by anti-personnel landmines. Indeed, there are approximately 23.7 million landmines, 17.2 million of which are in the area of Alamein, spread over an area of 162 miles, 262,000 hectares. They have been left over from the Second World War. These mines are a very serious and veritable danger to the security and life of innocent civilians.

So far, more than 8,000 people have fallen victim to these mines. The existence of these mines has hindered economic and human development efforts aiming at the exploitation of these regions for mining, economic activities, tourism, human resources and agriculture. These mines also represent a major obstacle to the development of a healthy environment and the absorption of the demographic increase in Egypt. The problem afflicting Egypt, namely the existence of such a large number of mines — 23.7 million — on Egyptian territory deserves the appreciation, the solidarity and the sympathy of the international community with this Egyptian problem and the provision of assistance in removing these mines from our territory.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): My delegation would like to take this opportunity to make some general remarks with regard to the draft resolutions dealing with anti-personnel landmines before this Committee.

Pakistan has been a long-standing adherent to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCWC). Our commitment to observe its rules reflects our conviction that the Convention and its Protocols represent a strong bulwark against the indiscriminate use of certain

conventional weapons, including anti-personnel landmines. Even before the Convention came into existence, we had a record, which has been established in history books, on the strict observance of humanitarian laws. These humanitarian laws were later embodied in the Convention and its Protocols. Our adherence to the Convention on Conventional Weapons and its Protocols, therefore, was undertaken without hesitation or delay.

A decade later, we welcomed the establishment of the group of governmental experts to address the global problem of landmines. It is an irony that the escalation in the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of landmines, which victimize innocent men, women and children, occurred in its worst manifestations after Protocol II had entered into force. Its rules were obviously ignored by many who are not party to it. They were violated by others, despite their obligations under the Protocol.

Having lived through the long war in Afghanistan, my country is fully cognizant of the toll that is taken by anti-personnel landmines. We therefore joined actively in the process which led to the conclusion of the revised Protocol II of the inhumane weapons Convention. The Protocol establishes a strict regime governing the use of landmines in order to protect civilians and non-combatants. It also establishes an appropriate international consultative mechanism. The negotiations for the revised Protocol II were complex and difficult. If a complete ban on anti-personnel landmines had been pressed in that context, there would have been no consensus on the revised Protocol.

The International Committee of the Red Cross conducted a study of 26 conflicts in which anti-personnel landmines were used extensively. It concluded that only in one case, that is, in the wars between Pakistan and India, had anti-personnel landmines been laid, and removed after the hostilities ended, in accordance with the rules governing the use of anti-personnel landmines. We will continue strictly to observe our treaty obligations under the Convention on Conventional Weapons. We will also ratify the revised Protocol on landmines.

In order to strengthen international efforts to address the problem of anti-personnel landmines, Pakistan has adopted a policy not to export anti-personnel landmines in a declared moratorium on the export of such weapons. We recognize that States interested in banning, and in a position to ban, anti-personnel landmines have concluded a treaty completely prohibiting anti-personnel landmines. We participated in the Ottawa process as an observer to underscore our shared concerns over the humanitarian problems caused by the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. Our legitimate security concerns and requirements for self-defence, however, do not permit Pakistan to sign this treaty. We therefore cannot endorse calls for the universalization of a complete ban on anti-personnel landmines.

We are of the view that, despite the treaty, the humanitarian problem resulting from the widespread and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines will not be alleviated unless the international community addresses important and outstanding issues. We feel that initiatives should focus on three areas. First, there must be efforts to secure the widest possible adherence to the amended Protocol II. We shall, therefore, support the draft resolution in A/C.1/52/L.22, which seeks to promote this goal. Secondly, the international community, especially those States which are financially in a position to do so, must support an invigorated programme to eliminate the landmines that have been placed in the past and which are responsible for the estimated 25,000 people killed by landmines each year.

The Final Declaration of the first Review Conference of the States Parties to the Conventional Weapons Convention called on States to

> "reinforce international cooperation for mine clearance, the development and dissemination of more effective technologies for mine clearance and the transfer of technology to facilitate the implementation of the prohibitions and restrictions set out in Protocol II and to seek to devote the resources necessary for this purpose". [CCW/CONF.I/16 (Part I), annex C]

In this context, Pakistan welcomes the recent initiative by the United States to increase resources for demining by a factor of five. Pakistan will seek to contribute to such endeavours. We also take note of the announcement by the Canadian delegation of an Ottawa track 2 process which will focus on efforts for demining and rehabilitation. We shall participate in this process as well.

Thirdly, action is required to explore in the Conference on Disarmament the further measures that could be taken to move towards the ultimate goal of prohibiting anti-personnel landmines without jeopardizing the security of certain States. Pakistan was the first country to propose in the Conference that a special coordinator be appointed to conduct such an exploration and evolve appropriate terms of reference for negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on anti-personnel landmines. We shall

therefore respond positively to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.23/Rev.1, despite reservations on some of its provisions.

Mr. Sha Zukang (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): We have stated on other occasions that landmines are very small objects. Especially when compared with outer space weapons and nuclear weapons, they are really small weapons. Therefore this question is actually not a major one. The big debate on this issue has been overblown. Everybody is talking about landmines as if the sky and the world will collapse without the debate on this issue. However, that is not the reality.

Two draft resolutions on anti-personnel landmines are now under discussion. One is contained in document A/C.1/52/L.1; the other, in document A/C.1/52/L.23/Rev.1, is entitled "Contributions towards banning anti-personnel landmines". On the question of anti-personnel landmines, we are about to take action on these two draft resolutions.

The Chinese delegation has very strong views on the Ottawa Convention and on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.1. The Ottawa Convention seeks an immediate, total ban on anti-personnel landmines, whether or not such a ban can actually be enforced, and whether or not it will ultimately be successful.

However, the Chinese delegation has its own views on this matter. First of all, China did not participate in the negotiation of the Ottawa Convention. Secondly, legitimate security concerns make it impossible for China, like many other countries, to achieve this immediate, total ban on anti-personnel landmines.

We have noted that the countries involved in the Ottawa process have, of their own free will, arrived at a Convention on the total ban of anti-personnel landmines, and we would like to express our respect for their choice, and our understanding for the humanitarian concern they have demonstrated. However, no country or people should impose any convention on any other country. And I do not believe this is the wish of the countries involved in the Ottawa process.

It remains the position of this delegation that in dealing with the questions that arise from anti-personnel landmines, it is only natural and a matter of course that we should take the humanitarian dimension into account. On this point, China feels as much concern as any other country represented in the room. However, we should not fail to take into account the legitimate security concerns of the relevant countries, for the question of security is also a very important dimension of humanitarian concerns.

That the security concern is not expressed does not mean that it does not exist. This is tantamount to self-deception. The right approach is to take both sides into account, namely, the security concern and the humanitarian concern. Giving primacy to one side while ignoring or bypassing the other is not the right approach.

In our view, landmines are simply defensive weapons, by their very nature. Historically, landmines have played a very important role in the fight of the peoples of the world, including the Chinese people, against Fascist and foreign aggressions. In the present new situation, many countries — in order to prevent military intervention and aggression, maintain territorial integrity and ensure that their people can live in peace — have kept the right to use landmines to satisfy their legitimate security needs, pending other alternatives and the establishment of an effective defence system.

While we emphasize this point, it does not negate the humanitarian concerns raised by this issue. At the same time, my delegation recognizes that the humanitarian issues raised by anti-personnel landmines are very important and deserve urgent solution. Such a solution should be based on facts and on addressing the root causes of those humanitarian concerns. In our view, those root causes are three: the shortcomings inherent in old-fashioned landmines; the abuse of landmines; and inadequate efforts at mine-clearance. We should thus approach the humanitarian concerns raised by anti-personnel landmines from the perspective of those three causes: we should correct the shortcomings, prevent the abuses, and intensify the efforts at mine-clearance.

If the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices (Protocol II) to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects can be accepted and can effectively come into force, then the first and second root causes can be dealt with adequately. As to the third cause, the international community has made mine-clearance efforts, and continues to do so. But this is not enough. Thus, the paramount task should be to intensify mine-clearance efforts.

If we do not do this, a convention totally prohibiting landmines — or even 100 conventions — will not solve the problem, for this would not address the fundamental issues, and landmines would continue to harm innocent civilians.

China continues to believe that the best framework for discussion of the question of anti-personnel landmines is the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its landmines Protocol. As early as 26 June 1997, at the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, the Chinese delegation stated its position: that China favours gradually achieving the ultimate goal of the total prohibition of anti-personnel landmines within that framework.

As the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament is supposed to concentrate on those questions relating to arms control and disarmament that have the greatest bearing on international peace, security and stability. But the majority of countries wish to discuss the question of anti-personnel landmines in the Conference on Disarmament because it lies within the sphere of arms control and disarmament. If the Conference on Disarmament can reach a consensus decision, we will not object to discussion of this question in the Conference. We are confident that, given the functions, representative nature, expertise and experience of the Conference on Disarmament, the Conference should be able to handle this issue.

In June, the Conference on Disarmament appointed a Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, Ambassador John Campbell of Australia. Mr. Campbell has done a great deal of work, but for various reasons the bilateral consultations with various members of the Conference on Disarmament are only now approaching completion, and the Conference has not had the opportunity to conduct a full debate on this issue. Hence, the Chinese delegation can go along with the reappointment of the Special Coordinator next year on the basis of the same mandate. For the sake of continuity, the Chinese delegation hopes that Mr. Campbell will continue as Special Coordinator.

Based on China's consistent position on anti-personnel landmines, my delegation is able to support draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23/Rev.1. We deeply regret, however, that the draft resolution makes no mention of very important security concerns. We believe this to be a grave shortcoming that the draft resolution ought not to have. No arms control or disarmament agreement should diminish the security of any country; that is just common sense.

We acknowledge that the question of anti-personnel landmines is an issue, but we do not believe that it is a big issue. Nonetheless, we are ready to join other members of the international community in making further efforts in this area.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): As this is the first time I have addressed the First Committee at this session, I wish as Head of my delegation to wish you well, Sir, as you carry out your noble responsibilities as Chairman of the Committee. I want to assure you that my delegation will do its best to support your efforts to achieve the desired goals of the Committee.

I want to speak of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.23/Rev.1. My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution. Our reasons are very simple: we would be remiss in our duty as the delegation of the Kingdom of Swaziland if we did not support efforts aimed at the total eradication of landmines — especially since His Majesty King Mswati III, when he addressed the General Assembly, stated the position of the Kingdom of Swaziland in no uncertain terms as it relates to a process that has ranged from Oslo to, very soon, Ottawa.

We have a million questions to ask, especially of delegations that may still have the desire to stockpile dangerous weapons. If we refer to the Charter, which is the guiding torch for the maintenance of international peace and security, we find that it says that we should unite our strength to maintain international peace and security. Under no circumstances should we waste our resources at this time by stockpiling dangerous weapons which all and sundry know very well to be injurious to humanity.

A landmine is a very dangerous weapon, and I want to indicate how it can look by making this metaphor. A certain head of family embarked upon the fortification of his home against witchcraft. Then he called a traditional doctor to come and fortify his homestead. One basic instruction by the traditional healer was that no one should come out of the house at night because the traditional magic would catch up with anybody walking outside and within the premises at night. Unfortunately, one of the sons in the family was not aware of such important injunctions, so he went out at night. Then he was caught in that particular magic and died.

If we keep landmines, our children will not read the manuals about how landmines should be operated. They will play in no matter what perimeter within the area of our country, and they will be destroyed. So what is the good,

therefore, of keeping landmines and giving explanations that they are for the national security and for the national interest?

At this point, I call upon the delegations assembled here today: let us dedicate all our resources towards improving our efforts to develop our economies; let us employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples.

With these general remarks, I want to say that the Kingdom of Swaziland fully supports the efforts exhibited by the Ottawa track 2 process, which we shall fully support and sign. Accordingly, it is our position that arms in whatever form that are being proliferated these days are against the interests of humanity, and therefore we shall support any process of disarmament which aims to eradicate all dangerous weapons.

The Chairman: Are there other delegations wishing to make general statements? I see none.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.22.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.22, entitled "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects", was introduced by the representative of Sweden at the 15th meeting of the Committee on 5 November 1997.

In addition to those countries listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/52/INF/2, it is also sponsored by the following countries: Cyprus and Mongolia.

The Chairman: The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.22 have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.22 was adopted.

The Chairman: I shall now call on those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote after the decision.

Mr. Danieli (Israel): Israel joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.22. Israel ratified the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in March 1995, participated in the Review Conference which Amended Protocol II of the Convention, and is at present reviewing the revised landmine Protocol.

Israel supports the effort being made to extend accession to the CCW to as many States as possible, particularly in the Middle East region. Israel's policy in this regard stems from its desire to reduce and prevent human suffering and to restrict the use of weapons that have indiscriminate effects. However, we feel that it is necessary to keep the balance between vital humanitarian concerns, on the one hand, and legitimate security concerns, on the other.

Joint action by the international community to prevent suffering from indiscriminate use of mines will in itself contribute to mutual trust and confidence. In this context, Israel reiterates its call to regional States to accede to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons as a regional confidence-building step towards further enhancement of security in our region.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation supported the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/52/L.22 because it believes that it is very important for the Committee to give a clear political signal about the special significance of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons — especially its Amended Protocol II, which we consider potentially to be the most effective instrument available to us for finding a solution to the humanitarian problems caused by the indiscriminate and irresponsible use of anti-personnel mines.

I would like to reaffirm that my country believes that our main efforts with regards to mines must be directed specifically at promoting respect for the Amended Protocol II, as it is currently the only universally accepted basis, having been achieved after intensive negotiations.

The Chairman: Are there other delegations wishing to speak at this stage? I see none.

I will now call upon those delegations wishing to make general statements, other than explanations of position or vote, on draft resolutions contained in cluster 5.

These being none, the Committee will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.40.

I now call on those members of the Committee wishing to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken.

Mr. Rao (India): My delegation would like to take this opportunity to explain its vote before the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.40.

The present draft suffers from a number of shortcomings. First, a regional approach must be arrived at freely when there is sufficient confidence among all the participants — militarily significant or not so significant, with larger or relatively small regional capabilities — that the agreements will serve their specific security interests.

Secondly, operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution requests the Conference on Disarmament to formulate principles for regional agreement on conventional arms control. This is not the task of the Conference on Disarmament, which is a negotiating body for global issues. In fact, we do not see the need for formulation of any such principles by anybody, given the fact that the guidelines and principles for regional approaches to disarmament have only very recently been formulated by the United Nations Disarmament Commission and endorsed by the General Assembly in 1993.

Thirdly, and most important from our point of view, the draft resolution refers in its sixth preambular paragraph to the proposals for conventional arms control made in the context of South Asia. As we stated earlier, we have reservations about such a reference for several reasons. We do not regard South Asia as a region for purposes of security and disarmament. Such a narrow definition does not fully reflect the security concerns of all the States in South Asia.

For this reason, my delegation will vote against draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.40.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.40. A recorded vote has been requested.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.40, entitled "Conventional arms control at the regional and subregional levels", was introduced by the representative of Pakistan at the 17th meeting on 7 November 1997. The draft resolution was sponsored by those countries contained in the draft itself and document A/C.1/52/INF/2.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

India

Abstaining:

Cuba, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.40 was adopted by 153 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions.

The Chairman: I shall now give the floor to those delegations wishing to explain their votes.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): As we have done in the past, we abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.40.

We recognize the validity of some of the text's ideas, such as the reference to the special responsibility of militarily significant States in promoting security agreements at the regional level, but there are other approaches reflected in the draft with which we do not agree. Indeed, we are moving away from the guidelines and recommendations on regional approaches that were adopted by the General Assembly after intense negotiations in the Disarmament Commission.

There is no reference in the preambular part of the draft resolution to the initiative and possibility for the effective participation of any State interested in the process, or to the need to take into account the particular characteristics of each region and the legitimate national security concerns of States. The text also omits any reference to the validity of the global process of arms control and its relationship to the regional and subregional processes.

As regards the operative part, we believe that any reference to the responsibilities of the Conference on Disarmament in considering specific questions should take account of the fact that the Conference on Disarmament must work on disarmament priorities.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.30.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.30, entitled "Verification in all its aspects, including the role of the United Nations in the field of verification", was introduced by the representative of Canada at the 16th meeting on 6 November 1997. The draft resolution was sponsored by those countries listed in the draft itself and in document A/C.1/52/INF/2.

The Chairman: The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.30 was adopted.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.31.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Committee wishing to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.31.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.31.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.31, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures", was introduced by the representative of Germany at the 15th meeting, on 5 November 1997. In addition to those countries listed in the draft resolution and in A/C.1/52/INF/2, it is also co-sponsored by Malta, Slovakia and Ukraine.

The Chairman: The sponsors of this draft resolution have expressed their wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.31 was adopted.

The Chairman: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their vote or position after the decision.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan has joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.31 on military expenditures. Nevertheless, we continue to have certain reservations regarding the provisions of this draft resolution.

In our view, greater transparency cannot be a substitute for efforts to reduce tensions and to resolve conflicts as a means of halting arms races in various parts of the world.

Secondly, transparency by itself cannot lead to reduction of military expenditures. The basic causes which impel States to acquire defensive arms and to maintain

armed forces at certain levels relate to their own national and regional security environments. It is these national and regional security problems which need to be addressed by the international community as a means of halting an arms build-up in various parts of the world.

Moreover, the specific methodologies proposed for guiding reductions in military expenditures are, in our view, also based on fallacious grounds. Specified percentages of budgets are meaningless when States are required to acquire and to maintain armed forces at levels which are necessary for the purposes of self-defence, especially against larger neighbours. It is obvious that smaller countries in many parts of the world are obliged to maintain higher percentages of their budgets for such expenditures. Any approach which seeks to draw a line on the basis of such budgets inherently favours the large and richer countries against the small and poorer countries. Therefore, this approach is not acceptable to my delegation.

We believe that disarmament, and especially conventional disarmament, should be promoted on a more equitable basis by addressing the problem in its reality — that is, in terms of the men and machines deployed, the methodologies for their deployment and their state of readiness. It is only through such realistic and hard efforts at negotiations that balanced reductions can be achieved in various parts of the world. Indeed, the experience in Europe at the conclusion of the EFE treaty confirms that it is this approach which was finally successful. We believe that it is this approach which will have to be followed in other parts of the world as well.

Mr. Danieli (Israel): Israel has joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.31. My country supports measures to curb the arms race, particularly those dealing with such weapons and systems that have proven to be destructive and destabilizing.

Israel also supports the reduction of military expenditures. In our own region all those measures have to be dealt with within the context of peace in the Middle East as a whole and as a part of a regional security cooperative system. Global reporting on military expenditures is viable only in a general context. More detailed reporting will require a regional understanding and settlement.

The Chairman: Are there any other delegations wishing to speak at this stage? I see none.

The Committee will proceed to consider draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.33/Rev.2.

I call on those members who wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken on the draft resolution. I see none.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.33/Rev.2.

I now call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.33/Rev.2, entitled "Compliance with arms limitation and disarmament and non-proliferation agreements", was introduced by the representative of the United States of America at the 16th meeting, on 6 November 1997. The draft resolution is sponsored by those countries listed in the draft resolution itself and in document A/C.1/52/INF/2.

The Chairman: The sponsors of this draft resolution have expressed their wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.33/Rev.2 was adopted.

The Chairman: I now give the floor to those representatives wishing to explain their position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Gong Chunsen (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/52/L.33/Rev.2, entitled "Compliance with arms limitation and disarmament and non-proliferation agreements". With the continuing development of arms control and disarmament, especially given that a series of treaties and legal instruments in this connection have been concluded and signed and have entered into force, compliance with agreements and strengthening the international effort for non-proliferation are especially necessary. We have noted that the international community as a whole welcomed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the protocol on strengthening the safeguards measures of the International Atomic Energy Agency. They were concluded on the basis of almost universal participation, and also took into account, to the greatest extent possible, the need for peaceful uses. They are therefore relatively more effective and vital.

Given that the relevant international legal instruments have been put into effect, or are close to being put into effect, the Chinese delegation believes that the existing discriminatory and exclusive mechanisms and arrangements for non-proliferation not only run counter to those international agreements, but inhibit the social and economic development of various countries, especially developing countries. They should therefore be rescinded, overhauled or renounced, and hence there is no need for States that are not party to them to comply with them.

The Chairman: Are there any other delegations wishing to explain their position? I see none.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.